



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.1635 | FAX (517) 373.3300

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/vanwoerkom/

For Immediate Release
April 14, 2005

Contact: Jeff Cobb
517-373-1635

Senate approves Van Woerkom legislation to encourage students to pursue careers in agriculture

LANSING – Residents could get relief from some of their student loans if they go into fields like agricultural processing or large animal veterinary medicine under legislation approved by the Michigan Senate Wednesday, announced Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom, sponsor of the bill.

“Agriculture is one of the largest sectors of Michigan’s economy, and agricultural processing is an area that continues to do well despite our state’s economic slowdown,” said Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores. “We need to build on our strengths to help Michigan’s economy get back on track, and this legislation will help do just that.”

Senate Bill 228 authorizes the state to repay up to \$750 a year for 10 years of a student's education loans if the student works in agricultural processing or large animal veterinary medicine during that time.

The agricultural processing industry is experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. During a food processing summit hosted by Van Woerkom in 2004, participants indicated that they were having a difficult time finding workers with skills in welding, hydraulics, and woodworking.

The bill is part of a package of legislation that aims to help Michigan’s rural economy.

SB 228 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

###